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RUEHZM/GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL COLLECTIVE
RUCPDOG/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L RIYADH 001870

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EEB/TPP/IPE AND NEA/ARP
USTR FOR JASON BUNTIN
USDOC FOR TYLER HOFFMAN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/17/2017

TAGS: [ECON](#) [ETRD](#) [EINV](#) [KIPR](#) [PGOV](#) [SA](#)
SUBJECT: SAUDIS CRACK DOWN ON ILLEGAL VENDORS

Classified By: Charge D'Affaires David Rundell for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) On December 28, Econoff met with Scott Butler, CEO of the Arab-Anti Piracy Alliance, and Ayman Takrori, Partners Group Director of Microsoft Arabia. Butler and Takrori related details of a meeting they had the previous day with Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Culture and Information Abdul Rahman Al-Hazaa and Chairman of the Intellectual Property Committee at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry Mohammad Al-Aiyash. Butler told Econoff that Al-Hazaa committed in the meeting to conducting raids "non-stop" on vendors that sell pirated or counterfeit goods.

¶2. (C) In the course of Econoff's meeting Takrori received a phone call from "a colleague" reporting that the "Al-Dosari shop in the Haraj neighborhood of Riyadh" had been raided the day before, and shut down. According to the colleague, a sign placed on the door of the shop read, "Closed by the Ministry of Culture and Information for Distribution of Illegal Goods."

¶3. (C) In a December 29 telcon, Econoff confirmed with Al-Hazaa that the shop had indeed been shut down and that an investigation of the proprietors had begun. Al-Hazaa also said the shop included a storage facility and the Saudi government seized over thirty-thousand counterfeit items.

¶4. (C) Comment: The SAG has talked extensively about cracking down on illegal vendors but, to date, this is the first example we know of the SAG actually closing a shop, demonstrating the SAG's increasing commitment to take decisive action. Continued raids and investigations of illicit manufacturers, traders, and vendors will increase the level of fear in the market and could help further reduce the sale of pirated goods in Saudi Arabia. End comment.
RUNDELL